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HOTELS GAINING POPULARITY **WITH CORPORATE TRAVELERS, MEETING PLANNERS**

LONGWOOD, Fla. – Business travelers and small meeting planners alike are increasingly discovering Seminole County hotel properties -- ranging from **luxury suites to standard accommodations** -- are convenient, affordable alternatives when business brings them to Central Florida.



“Seminole County prides itself on catering to the value-conscious business traveler,” said Jack Wert, Seminole County Convention & Visitors Bureau tourism director. “Hotels in the area offer rates that average one-third less when compared with competitive choices nearer the major attractions, without sacrificing convenience.

“In fact, the majority of Seminole hotels are located within five miles of downtown Orlando and just minutes away from Maitland Center (a thriving business campus), Lake Mary/Heathrow office parks and the Altamonte Springs business center. And Seminole boasts some of Orlando’s **finest restaurants, entertainment and shopping** opportunities.”



Key business traveler/group meetings properties here include: the 210-room Embassy Suites Orlando North, the 209-room Hampton Inn Orlando North/Altamonte Springs, the 263-room Holiday Inn Orlando-Altamonte Springs, the 322-room Hilton Orlando/Altamonte, the 196-room Ramada Inn North-Orlando, and the 128-suite Residence Inn by Marriott.

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Most of the county's 3,700 lodging units -- and all the above-mentioned hotels -- are **situated directly off of I-4**, the major interstate running through Orlando. "The I-4 corridor location is particularly appealing to those corporate travelers also conducting business in Tampa or Daytona Beach," said Wert. "They can establish a base of operations here and easily make day trips in either direction."

Beth Cale, training coordinator for Savannah-based CareOne home health care, recently conducted a two-month session of in-house seminars here for the same reason. "When we trained our regional personnel on new software conversion, we needed a central point for those traveling from Jacksonville and Melbourne. Seminole County is a good mid-point because it's easily accessible. And the number of restaurants in the immediate vicinity is a plus," she said.

All Seminole County business properties **offer business center services** (the Hampton Inn offers a dedicated business center), on-site security, and a high proportion (some as high as 75%) of non-smoking guest rooms. Many feature in-house fitness centers or guest access to neighboring health club facilities, **express check-in/check-out** and complimentary morning newspapers.

Meanwhile, many offer **data port phones** and **free local calls**, 24-hour room service, complimentary continental breakfast, hospitality hours or dinner buffets. One property -- the Residence Inn -- even delivers groceries free of charge for its fully equipped guest kitchens. And the Hilton offers full concierge service and 84 concierge-level rooms.

Beyond the tangible amenities, Seminole County hoteliers -- some boasting consecutive honors from their respective national hotel chains -- cite top-notch service as the key to the area's burgeoning corporate marketing popularity.

"Orlando is a very competitive marketplace," said M.M. "Red" McCullough, Ramada Inn general manager. "Service excellence and minimal staff turnover are extremely important elements to success here."

Individual meeting facilities in Seminole County can accommodate as many as 600, although smaller training seminars, sales meetings and executive brainstorming sessions comprise the majority of the county's corporate group business.

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“Location is one of the factors that sets Seminole County hotels apart,” said Pat Looney, Hilton general manager. “But it’s also our size. When we have a small meeting group here, it doesn’t get lost in the crowd like it would at a 1,000-room property. We can **provide** them more **individual attention**.”

The formula seems to be working.

“What’s gratifying is that our hoteliers are experiencing a very high volume of repeat business from corporate travelers and small meeting planners,” said Wert. “I guess we’ve become their ‘home away from home’ in Central Florida.”

About Seminole County



Located just minutes north of downtown Orlando and a short drive from Central Florida attractions, you will find Seminole County, offering a unique travel experience. Visitors can combine nature and outdoor recreation, cultural and historic sights, sports training facilities, championship golf courses and shopping – all in a convenient, central location. With an array of 4,000 great hotel rooms, 50+ delicious restaurants and 2,000 lakes and waterways, Seminole County is truly ***Florida’s Natural Choice***.

For destination information call ***1-800-800-7832*** (USA and Canada) or ***407-665-2900*** (outside the USA) or go “site-seeing” at ***www.visitseminole.com***.

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